

## In Love With My Best Friend Chapter 2

Astrea

Days passed by after that night. At first, I was scared that I might display strange signs. I didn't know what the rogues did that night, but waking up in the centre of a bizarre circle had me thinking. However, as days passed with nothing weird happening, I slowly let go of it and went on with my life.

Perhaps it wasn't something I should worry about. Yet, that ordeal taught me an important lesson – never go into the woods alone, especially if there were rogue sightings. I would have to wait until I matured and completed my training.

Months marched on. Surprisingly, the constant rogue sightings ceased. At first, I was delighted. I thought that they had finally given up, but the leaders of the pack sensed danger due to their sudden silence rather than peace. Hence, they decided to go to the lycan Palace to meet the Queen and discuss it.

I was waiting beside my mom, the pack's luna, while they discussed it. Mom and dad, along with the beta couple, planned to travel to meet the Queen. The gamma couple were to remain in the pack so that they could handle the pack while the Alpha and Beta couple were gone. It wouldn't be a problem since the Gamma had people to get help from. My uncle Cade and his mate, who was a hybrid, and two other warriors – Elijah and Philip and their mates, who worked a bit closer than regular warriors, would undoubtedly lend a hand.

“Would you like to join us?” My dad asked me, taking me by surprise. A gigantic grin spread across my face as I greedily nodded my head.

“Yes!” I squealed, clapping my hands. I hadn't seen Leo for more than a year and going to Lycan Palace meant that I would see him. It has been so long since we last saw each other.

We grew up together. We did almost everything together until he had to leave. His parents sent him to the lycan palace when his wolf didn't wake up on his sixteenth birthday and they suspected that he might be a lycan like his mother, our beta female, Ava.

“Looks like you are excited to see him,” my mom laughed and I felt my cheeks heat up. Hoping that they wouldn’t notice my flushed face, I laughed with her anxiously.

“Of course. She is eager to see her best friend,” beta Ava smiled. “It has been a long time, isn’t it?” She raised an eyebrow at me while she bobbed her head.

Smiling bashfully, I nodded my head. Of course, I was enthusiastic about seeing him. It has indeed been a long time. My heart swelled with joy and a continuous smile stretched over my lips. I couldn’t hide my enthusiasm from them despite my efforts to conceal my emotions.

“Surely,” uncle Cade smirked. “Have fun little one. I’m sure he will be delighted to see you too.”

“So, we will leave in the morning. I have already informed the Palace about it and our queen is rather delighted to have us there. We will prepare and leave after breakfast tomorrow. How does that sound?” My dad asked and all of them nodded their heads in agreement.

All of us dispersed and hopped back to my room. Involuntarily humming my favourite tune as I went back, I entered the room and closed the door. I was elated, without a doubt. I missed my best friend a lot, but I was going to see him! How exciting! Still grinning like a fool, I took a deep breath, in an attempt to calm my erratic heart.

“You are acting so weird,” Ash mumbled in my head.

“Huh?” I raised an eyebrow.

“Yeah. Ever since dad asked us to join them on their little trip you are acting strange. Like you are going to meet a long lost lover or someone like that,” she said.

I chuckled. “Well, he is my best friend and I do love him like a friend,” I told my wolf. “Don’t you miss that goofy i\*\*\*\*t?”

She sighed. “Yeah. I do. And you are right. He is our bestie,” she agreed with me.

“Do you think we should call and tell him?” She asked.

Shaking my head, “no. We won’t tell him. Let’s see how he reacts when he sees us,” I suggested, and she agreed.

I struggled to sleep the entire night. My excitement made it tough for me to rest. I kept thinking about the next day, feeling elated about meeting my best friend after more than a year.

I was eager to see the progress he had made in his training. He was a little older than me and had turned eighteen a few months back. He was delighted when he started to display the first signs of being a lycan. He had told me about his scent but he still had to wait for his lycan to wake up.

I lay thinking about him and slept late, yet I was up as soon as the clock struck five in the morning. I knew my parents would be up already, so I freshened up and rushed downstairs.

“Oh, hey. We thought we would wake you up a bit later since we weren’t going to train today,” dad said as soon as he saw me.

I grinned.

“When are we leaving?” I asked.

“At around seven in the morning,” mom replied, smiling. “Come and have some brownies.”

Without saying anything in response, I went to have some of the brownies she had.

The next two hours seemed to drag by. Ash kept teasing me about being too excited about the trip, but I didn’t care. Finally, it was time to leave.

The four hour trip seemed to be longer than usual. Yet I managed to remain silent. I kept myself busy by playing games on my phone, at times opening and closing the online chat log with Leo. My fingers itched, wanting to inform him about our arrival, but part of me wanted to surprise him.

After what seemed like an eternity, our car came to a halt and my parents climbed out of the car. My throat tightened and my heart pounded. A sudden fear gripped my heart. I kept staring at my icy fingers, too scared to look out of the window.

“Ash?” I called my wolf.

“Yeah?”

“What if he has changed? What if he doesn’t want to be my best friend anymore?” I voiced my thoughts through our link.

“Don’t over think. He is still our friend. We chat online and talk over the phone, don’t we?” She replied.

I nodded, trying to gulp down the lump in my throat. A tap on the window made me look up. My mom was crouching down and gesturing for me to get out of the car.

Heaving a deep breath, I opened the door.

“Here goes,” I mumbled and climbed outside. The familiar ever-smiling faces of the Queen and the Royal Prince welcomed me. My eyes darted to the young men who stood on either side. One was undoubtedly Xander, the crown Prince. I smiled politely and bowed my head. My breathing hitched when my eyes made contact with the tall, buff youngster who stood beside Sir Elliot. With a well built frame, he certainly looked different. He had grown taller and more muscular. Perhaps it was because of the training. However, the sharp jawline and the familiar eyes, I knew that it was none other than Leo.

I felt myself go numb. Was this truly my Leo? I had seen him in pictures, but seeing him in real life was just different. He looked more mature... more.... attractive.

I stared at him as beta Nolan and Ava greeted him with a warm hug. It was definitely him. My lips parted.

I remained frozen in my steps, wondering how a year could have changed someone so much.

“Hey, it has been a long time since we last met.”

It was Zelda, Xander’s younger sister, who spoke to me, interrupting my thoughts. I forced a smile and accepted her hug.

“How are Kiara and the others?” She asked.

Smiling, “they are all doing great,” I told her. All of them shook hands and greeted me – all except Leo.

“Come on in. We have a lot to discuss,” Prince Elliot invited us in. The elders went in and just as I was about to follow them, Leo stepped closer and flashed a lopsided smile that made my heart skip a beat.

“Hey,” his voice was deep and it did something to me.

“H...hey,” I tried not to stammer but I couldn’t help it.

He held his hand out. “It’s nice to see you after a long time,” he said.

“Yeah,” I laughed anxiously. My eyes darted towards Xander, who was smirking at me. He glanced at Leo and raised an eyebrow.

“That’s it? No hugs? Man! I thought you were excited about meeting her!” He exclaimed, patting Leo’s shoulder.

My lips slowly stretched in a smile. “You knew?” I asked.

Scratching the back of his neck, he smiled sheepishly, “Yeah. Mom told me last night,” he said.

I chuckled. Perhaps I wasn’t the only one who was anxious.

“Can I hug you?” He asked, making my grin stretch wider.

Shrugging my shoulders, “why not?” I replied.

He took a step closer and wrapped his arms around me. This wasn’t the first time we hugged, but this time, as he collected me in his embrace, I felt my heart race with excitement.

That is because he is my best friend.

I told myself.

Ash snickered internally, yet didn’t comment on it. She silently retracted to the back of my head and I was glad that I didn’t have to deal with her smart mouth.

Closing my eyes, I inhaled his scent. He was right. His scent had changed and he smelt so good. I felt him slowly release me. Smiling, I stepped away.

“Let’s go. They must be in the meeting room now,” he said, and walked inside with Xander.

As I followed his lead, I looked at his frame and then at Xander’s. Both of them were good looking, but my heart seemed to bend towards Leo.

He is closer to me, because he is my best friend and I grew up with him.

I repeated in my head. Yes. That must be it. Why else should I feel inclined towards him?